

FY 19



Iowa
Vocational
Rehabilitation
Services

Finding solutions. Generating success.

AGENCY PERFORMANCE REPORT

PERFORMANCE RESULTS FOR STATE FISCAL YEAR 2019

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Introduction

This report represents Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) outcomes related to our Agency Performance Plan ending June 30, 2019. IVRS is a division of the Iowa Department of Education. Accomplishments include those related to core functions identified in the IVRS SFY 2019 Performance Plan as well as progress toward goals in the 2019-2022 IVRS Strategic Plan. Information in this report is provided in accordance with the Accountable Government Act to improve decision-making and increase accountability to Iowa stakeholders and citizens.

Our Agency Performance Report will provide an update on progress toward the IVRS strategic plan goals as well as information on performance of the three identified core functions of the agency:

- Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Independent Living
- Economic Supports
- Agency Resource Management.

Information for the two major program areas named below will be presented using the *Key Results Template*. These continue to be key indicators of this agency's success in providing services to our customers.

Key Services

Key services of the agency are essentially separated into two major program areas:

1. Services that assist Iowans with disabilities to become employed in the competitive labor market or to live independently in their homes through provision of various supports.
2. Services involving the evaluation of Iowa citizens' disabilities to determine eligibility for economic support via Social Security disability benefits.

Waiting List

IVRS has managed a waiting list of eligible job candidates seeking vocational rehabilitation services since May 2002, and has had to balance the need for VR services against restricted funding and limited staff capacity to meet all needs identified. We have focused on increased staff capacity through expansion of third party contracts. These contracts are related to employment services for workers age 55 and older as well as a specific focus on students with disabilities in transition. Our Intermediary Network contract with our community colleges, our Transition Alliance Programs with our school districts, Project Searches, Making the Grade and our Iowa School for the Deaf contract are all examples of strategic initiatives improving capacity and positively influencing employment outcomes. Approximately \$3 million additional federal monies came to Iowa consumers because of these partnerships.

IVRS has a waiting list, which we have attempted to decrease. The waiting list on June 30, 2019 contained 147 individuals, and was 574 less than a year ago on June 30, 2018. During the past year, an intentional effort was made to remove individuals on the "others eligible" waiting list, which was the first time since 2009 that individuals from that list were contacted for service delivery. This is a positive reflection of agency efforts to impact efficiency and effectiveness as well as the ability to maximize federal dollars drawn through matching available state funding. As the year proceeded, we did identify staff capacity issues and received direction from the State Rehabilitation Council recommending priority services should focus on outreach and service to individuals meeting our most significant disability categories. This created a shift in focus occurring in the later part of 2019. Planning for 2020 will include a growth in our waiting list.

The individuals currently on the waiting list are those individuals eligible for the "Others Eligible" category. Individuals with significant disabilities or those with the most significant disabilities are entering service delivery almost immediately. Strategies related to moving individuals into service is directly correlated with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act legislation that significantly shifted the programming of

IVRS so that individuals with disabilities are able to receive services as part of the mainstream of society. As a result, those individuals whose disability is not as significant can and should be served by the core partner services. This allows IVRS to focus on serving individuals with the most significant disabilities as well as providing for increased access for students in high school who are under an Individual Education Plan or covered under section 504.

So while the IVRS caseload appears to be a constant, in actuality IVRS is serving substantially more individuals with disabilities. We also are assisting core partners in learning how to serve those individuals for whom the disability is not as significant as those served by IVRS. The current active caseload (without the waiting list) as of June 30, 2019 was **12,285**. This is only **40** less than a year ago. IVRS staff are also serving over **7,149** job candidates that are potentially eligible through secondary transition efforts and another 3720 students who have been referred and made eligible for services. The **7,149** individuals are not reflected in the actual caseload numbers, but it is a requirement to serve those individuals through the federal mandates outlined in the WIOA legislation. The total number of individuals being impacted through service delivery is therefore **19,434** individuals.

Disability Determination Services Bureau Commendation

The Disability Determination Services bureau has met and exceeded the requirements set out by the Social Security Administration for accuracy and timeliness associated with determinations on disability claims. The DDS Bureau received special commendations from the Regional SSA office with the following feedback received from our Regional Commissioner:

Congratulations to you and all of the Iowa DDS staff for completing this past fiscal year with such success. FY 2019 presented us with multiple challenges; however, your staff worked tirelessly toward its goals. Below are just a few of your many accomplishments through September 30, 2019.

- Processed 7,089 cases in the Disability Case Processing System (DCPS)
- Cleared 5,026 CDRs or 102.2% of the goal; 110.5% of receipts cleared
- Cleared 20,889 initial claims or 96.6% of the goal; 100.3% of receipts cleared
- Provided critical assistance to multiple DDSs: 1,841 determinations and 4,293 medical/psychological reviews
- Provided excellent customer service by creating a high quality product, with an initial performance accuracy of 95.9%

I also want to thank you for your generous allocation of resources to initiatives, which further the agency's mission. You, as a member of the DCPS Steering Committee, and your staff on the DUIT Team, provide ongoing essential feedback to the DCPS CPO. Your early support for this critical systems modernization will help ensure the final product meets the needs of the DDS community. In addition, you allow your staff to serve on national workgroups where their valuable input influences policy and procedure.

Your personal commitment was evident again this year in your service as President of the National Council of Disability Determination Directors (NCDDD). You represent the DDS community well on NCDDD, as well as the National Disability Issues Group (NDIG), where your innovative ideas improve our disability processes. Your efforts and willingness to share your resources resulted in excellent service to the residents of Iowa.

Thank you for your leadership and best wishes in FY 2020!

Agency Overview

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) exists to serve individuals with disabilities under Title II and Title XVI of the federal Social Security Act and Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). IVRS serves people with disabilities by: 1) providing vocational-related assistance to achieve economic independence through competitive integrated employment; or 2) providing disability determinations that result in appropriate financial benefits per Social Security Administration guidelines.

Services through the Independent Living Program may provide financial assistance to enable persons with disabilities to maintain independent functioning as long as possible within their communities and to prevent institutionalization. Examples of these services would include bathroom modifications and ramps to improve physical accessibility for safe entry/exit. IVRS is an integral part of the statewide disability community and has demonstrated leadership nationally in assisting individuals with disabilities through a progressive employment process to achieve competitive integrated employment for the most significantly disabled Iowans who have never worked.

The current statements of mission and vision are included below. The Strategic Objectives are identified in the results section of this report.

Mission

We provide expert, individualized services to Iowans with disabilities to achieve their independence through successful employment and economic support.

Core Functions

Assist eligible Iowans with disabilities in obtaining, maintaining and advancing in employment through rehabilitation services individually designed to disability and employment needs. Provide specialized services to the business community to meet their workforce and workplace needs.

Determine eligibility of Iowans who apply for disability benefits administered by the federal Social Security Administration.

Vision

Vocational Rehabilitation Services Vision:

Making a positive difference with every person, one person at a time.

Disability Determination Services Bureau Vision:

Best Decision, Every Claimant, Every Time.

Agency Background

Funding

IVRS is the largest division of the Department of Education and functions with considerable autonomy. The division employs over 370 people in 44 locations throughout the state. Employees work within three bureaus and a Planning and Development Team. For vocational rehabilitation services, IVRS received \$27.1 million in federal funds and another \$7.3 million in non-federal funds; for disability determination services, IVRS received federal funds totaling approximately \$27 million from the Social Security Administration (no state funds).

Staff

The majority of staff persons are professionally trained rehabilitation counselors and disability examiners. 99% of the counselors have Master's degrees in Counseling or a closely related field. IVRS is mandated by its federal funding agency, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, to employ qualified rehabilitation counselors. All disability examiners have at least a Bachelor's degree or its equivalent. In addition, DDSB has on its payroll 37 professional consultants who are licensed as physicians, clinical psychologists, or speech pathologists. Most IVRS employees are covered under collective bargaining agreements negotiated with Iowa United Professionals or the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

All employees of the Planning Development Team, Administrative Services and Disability Determination Services bureaus work in the Des Moines area. With the exception of a few administrative personnel and the Des Moines area office, the Rehabilitation Services Bureau employees are geographically located outside of Des Moines to cover all 99 counties and every high school in the state. As stewards of the public trust, IVRS maintains an efficient workforce by assigning staff to multiple locations so that every community college, regent's institution, county, community rehabilitation programs, high school and most mental health institutes have access to an IVRS staff person. We have continued to make a commitment to the use of technology in efforts to reduce travel costs and find efficiencies in communication and access to information.

WIOA and Collaborative Partnerships

In July 2014, federal legislation passed on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. (WIOA) This mandates that IVRS, IWD, Adult Education/Literacy, Dislocated Worker Program, Wagner-Peyser, and the Youth Programs work collaboratively to maximize resources and minimize duplication. IVRS has been a key partner in the Unified Planning and development of the Memorandum of Understanding. IVRS continues to collaborate with our partner agencies to improve work effectiveness.

We recognize that IVRS' work in the One-Stops expands opportunities for persons with disabilities through the technical expertise and guidance that IVRS staff provides in advocacy, system development, and accessibility technical assistance. This occurs through communication and avoiding duplication of services through true collaboration. Stronger partnerships are encouraged beyond simple co-location or itinerant offices in the Iowa Workforce Development Centers, community colleges, regent's institutions and through coverage at our mental health institutions.

The Iowa Workforce Development State Board formed a standing committee led by IVRS representation called the Disability Access Committee. The Statewide Disability Access Committee is made up of diverse representation from various stakeholders and provides guidance to local and regional Disability Access Committees in positively impacting physical and program accessibility at the local One Stop Centers as well as creating action steps to impact service delivery focused on employment through the implementation of an integration model.

The State Workforce Board made recommendations this past year on changing the regional workforce structure and we are still awaiting guidance from the Department of Labor regarding the impact of those decisions. Once the regional make-up is confirmed, IVRS will be leading the Disability Access Committee work in partnership with the Iowa Department for the Blind in promoting integrated services in our One Stop Centers focused on the areas of Career Services, Outreach and Intake, Assessment, Case Services, Business Engagement, and Career Pathways.

IVRS Bureau Functions

The Rehabilitation Services Bureau (RSB) has the primary responsibility for delivering the statewide program of quality vocational rehabilitation services to all recipients and eligible lowans with disabilities through direct and purchased services from a network of providers. The focus of the RSB is training individuals with disabilities to prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment and as such, works very closely with the Department of Education and Iowa Workforce Development.

The Disability Determination Services Bureau (DDSB) is responsible for determining the eligibility of Iowa residents who apply for Social Security Disability Insurance (Title II), and Supplemental Security Income (Title XVI), or the Department of Human Services Medicaid programs. DDSB makes the initial determination of eligibility and any subsequent determination of continuing eligibility and handles first-level appeals of unfavorable decisions.

The Administrative Services Bureau (ASB) provides fiscal, personnel, information technology services and administrative support to the other Bureaus.

The Planning and Development Team (PDT) is responsible for planning, program evaluation, and outreach. The mission of the PDT is to provide analysis, strategic initiatives and program service delivery enhancing the agency's ability to comply with federal and state regulations in the delivery of our federal grant award. PDT optimizes available resources to enhance implementation of the IVRS agency mission and vision.

IVRS Customers

IVRS customers are individuals with disabilities who need vocational and other assistance to help meet their goals for employment through the RSB. IVRS works with individuals experiencing all types of disability with the exception of visual impairments, those individuals are served by the Iowa Department for the Blind.

The Independent Living Program encourages personal independence and assists individuals with disabilities to remain living in their home and community. The DDSB provides needed financial benefits due to an individual's disability. Vocational rehabilitation and disability determination programs are eligibility rather than entitlement programs. Applicants must meet federally determined criteria. Customers of RSB and DDSB may apply on multiple occasions during their lifetime. Customers of the vocational rehabilitation program – be they lowans with disabilities or the business community, expect and receive professional and accurate career planning information and involvement to achieve workforce planning, placement or personal independence. DDSB claimants require accurate and timely decisions on their claims.

IVRS also provides oversight of state and federal monies that pass through our Division and are dispersed to the Statewide Independent Living Council and six independent living centers in the state of Iowa. The Centers provide five core services that assist lowans with disabilities to be able to remain living independently in the community of their choice, as follows: 1. Information and Referral; 2. Independent Living Skills Training; 3. Peer Support; 4. Individual and Systems Advocacy; and 5. Transition

The six centers include:

Central Iowa Center for Independent Living - Des Moines

Access 2 Independence- Iowa City

Disabilities Resource Center of Siouxland- Sioux City

League of Human Dignity, Southwest Iowa Center for Independent Living - Council Bluffs

Illinois/Iowa Center for Independent Living - Rock Island

South Central Iowa Center for Independent Living - Oskaloosa

How We Determine Success

Competitive success is determined at the federal level by performance standards and indicators. In DDSB, that translates to timeliness and accuracy of case processing; on the vocational rehabilitation side, success relates to employment outcomes and equal access to services. IVRS has a myriad of data collection and reporting requirements and due to feedback received from our strategic planning efforts, staff clearly voiced a feeling of being overwhelmed by data reporting requirements. Initiatives are underway to focus on employment outcomes and pre-employment transition hours as clear priority areas. Under WIOA, the performance standards continue to be in transition as we move towards an accountability system with common measures across core programs.

Strategic Plan

The IVRS strategic plan is dated 2019-2022. It was developed with input from our State Rehabilitation Council and integrates visions of high achieving private Fortune 500 companies along with a national vocational rehabilitation vision. During the past year, our Rehabilitation Services Bureau Chief has led a strategic plan work group representing field staff from each area office. We gathered information regarding what is working well, what is not working well, what needs to be changed and what needs to continue. We also had two different management team retreats to obtain feedback and improve communication as well as establish priority areas as we move forward. As a base foundation, the following points are consistently discussed with all staff and serve as our compass for strategic initiatives:

- **VR is driven by a commitment to people with disabilities and businesses at the intersection of ability and the demand for talent.**
- Principle #1: **Innovating Solutions** to achieve greater success to and use of vocational rehabilitation services. Our goal is to achieve the most effective outcomes for our customers.
- Principle 2: **Building careers and retaining talent** in America's workforce by investing expertise and resources to benefit our customers.
- Principle 3: **Customizing services and expertise** that provide flexible supports and services. We accomplish this through specialized strategies to meet the workforce goals of our customers.
- Principle 4: **Leading and Engaging in Collaborative Strategies** with our partners who are working with us to achieve greater collective impact at all system levels (national, state, and local)

This is outlined in our strategic plan under the concepts of **Visionary Leadership, Customer Focus, Valuing employees and Partners, Managing for Innovation, Management by Facts and Focus on Results and Creating Value.**

Feedback gathered during the past year in these areas include:

Visionary Leadership

Working Well: Streamlining responsibilities, Pre-Ets, 510 meetings, core partner collaboration, business specialist focus, progressive employment, sector board strategies, success stories, local E 1st Team,

Not Working Well: Internal control documentation, IRSS –reminders and steps to complete, Holding contractors responsible, some performance measures seem unattainable, No concept of placement blueprint plan, need quarterly survey to staff for feedback, More training on Pre-Ets, Hiring of contract staff should have VR input, Placement culture depends upon office, need curriculum for pre-ets, need budget for pre-ets service delivery, career index use and buy-in. Capturing success stories. Group space in schools, flexibility in scheduling, office “26” goal, more referrals for placement, gap in transition to adult services, summer camp attendance – takes time – not all JC attend

Customer Focus

Working Well: Dual Customer approach, business service engagement, local flexibility, career index as a strategy, Power DMS, Integration Continuum Assessment, Action oriented work teams, Monitoring visits with contracts, CORE partner collaboration on business training, Peer mentoring with new staff, Job Candidate handbook potential, JC videos

Not Working Well: Training for Power DMS – need refresher, we roll out things before they are finalized, hard to access apprenticeships, No information on Geo Solutions, We don't know partner language, IWD Titles, Need training for CRP's, lack of consistency in summer Pre-Ets, sharing of data. College counselors need to be included in meetings. Need flexibility to serve JC where they are at in life stage. May not be job ready. Need more local outreach and sharing of success, automated texts, training on career counseling

Valuing Employees and Partners

Working Well: Power DMS, Benefits Planning, Zoom Meetings, flexibility in Discovery, County teams in rural areas, ISE Small business flexibility, Sector strategies

Not Working Well: Manpower Partnerships, Growth of Pre-Ets creates balance issues, Turnover, Benefits Planning is a challenge, More access to AT in schools, Training of new staff is overwhelming, No consistent messaging from supervisors and Des Moines, Communication with MCO's, Office meetings don't work well for training on BP, MI, ISE, Need ethics training for CRC. Need DE leadership at local school meetings. Need QA feedback. Disconnect with business services and partners.

Managing for Innovation

Working Well: Use of Google, teamwork in offices, cell phone, tablets, Policy Newsletters

Not Working Well: IT Connections, Barriers for access between partners, IRSS Intelligence, Financial staff should know counseling process, Want a QA Newsletter, All staff should have access to technology, Credential measuring, Google calendar trainings, download flexibility for phones, Confusion on uploading files into IRSS. MI Training does not work. No knowledge of Integration Continuum Assessment

Management by Facts

Working Well: 510 meetings, supervisor Friday calls, TAP meetings

Not Working Well: Understand and use of data, use of 510 report, budget for pre-ets activities, Need timely feedback for QA, Messaging of data in public settings

Focus on Results Creating Value

Working Well: Ticket to Work, BP cadre, Increased tools in the tool box, partnerships, open door policy with partners – true collaboration, CRP increasing their value, Employment First training and flexibility

Not Working Well: Tracking data and showing value, limited resources in rural Iowa, lack of mental health connections, accessible services for targeted disabilities autism, deaf, turnover of CRP staff, Universal packet for all job candidates, More intentional communication on what is occurring, Lack of training on 413 entries, Section 511 confusion

Following review of the strategic plan work groups several key strategic initiatives were revised or created including the following priority areas:

1. ReThink VR performance identifying opportunities for local engagement, creativity, and service delivery with attention on staff training, supervision, engagement and monitoring of performance based upon incremental progress.
2. Development of Area Office Blueprint Plans focused on trend data related to employment outcomes and Pre-Employment Transition hours with focused action steps in the areas of: Placement, Community Rehabilitation Providers, Quality of Services/Engagement, and Pre-Employment Transition Hours.
3. Focus on employment outcomes and pre-employment transition hours
4. Develop a leadership council, which will revise our current coordination council role
5. Establish an executive management team, which will combine budget team with agency field impact.
6. Revise meeting times related to conducting Planning and Development and Supervisor meetings to establish consistent communication patterns as well as statewide office training meetings.

These changes have been integrated into our strategic plan with minor changes in the actual goals reflecting feedback regarding the local office plans, the focus on employment outcomes and pre-employment transition hours, the use and accessibility of staff technology and assistive technology for our job candidates, the inclusion of Vision 2020 language consistent with Mission and Vision, and the support of Information Technology developers.

IVRS Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 1: VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

All IVRS staff contribute to the mission and vision of the agency through their daily work and collaboration across work teams. All staff embrace the opportunity to contribute to the mission and vision and learn new skills and knowledge, adapting to an ever-changing environment that is focused on improved employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Strategy 1-A

Each area office implements a local area office plan, which serves as a decision-making tool, improving their placement culture and results in increased employment outcomes and pre-employment transition hours.

Strategy 1-B

Area offices transition plans are collaboratively developed with local school officials that lead to successful delivery and meeting of pre-employment transition goals and connections for students with disabilities to post-secondary training and/or competitive community integrated employment.

Results:

In 2017, IVRS had 2080 outcomes, in 2018, we had 2097 outcomes, in 2019, we had 2124 outcomes. Common performance measures are still being discussed and systems being developed to obtain the data and to be able to share it across systems. IVRS has three developers hired and in place anticipated by January 1, 2020. The immediate priority is to get the case management system in compliance for federal reporting as of July 1, 2020. Then we can transition to quality projects.

The use and integration of Power DMS has been successful and staff are finding ways to become aware of policy/procedures and training more effectively.

Goal 2: CUSTOMER FOCUS

All IVRS staff appreciate the dual customer approach of quality engagement with our job candidates and our business partners, resulting in valued service delivery. All staff have ownership and accountability when service practices do not support the needs of our customer base and provide recommendations to resolve the gap.

Strategy 2-A

Training curriculum implemented statewide and across offices that represents individual differences in service delivery areas and critical priorities of individual staff.

Strategy 2-B

IVRS identifies and communicates to all staff core competencies in dual customer service outreach and engagement.

Strategy 2-C

Expand the capacity of business engagement through effective use of NET, business teams, individual staff and collaborative efforts across teams.

Strategy 2-D

Job candidates are engaged and receive services in a seamless process to increase career placement and retention measures through improved services, process improvements and access to resources.

Results:

Success stories are being shared through YouTube Channel and special recognition was highlighted at the statewide Society of Human Resource professionals as IVRS was recognized in two different videos highlighting collaborative service delivery and business partnerships.

Power DMS case reporting is tracking training and policy implementation.

Goal 3: VALUING EMPLOYEES AND PARTNERS

Collaborative partnerships increase service capacity, minimize duplication and maximize resources available. All staff strive to share information in an effort to create a seamless system for our customers.

Strategy 3-A

Collaborative partnerships occur across systems to build capacity and improved alignment of services.

Strategy 3-B

Develop Agency work groups for purposes of sharing promising practices; feedback from all levels is received on policy/processes and service delivery.

Strategy 3-C

IVRS management supports and develops structures for existing and emerging VR practices in formal, informal and continuing education environments

Strategy 3-D

Employment partnerships are maintained with Department of Veterans Affairs, Iowa Department for the Blind, Iowa Department of Aging, Iowa Workforce Development, Intermediary networks and Employer Disability Resource Network. Identify other collaborative system partnerships that will enhance the ability of state employment systems to positively impact the Governor's priorities.

Strategy 3-E

IVRS supports and recognizes the key contributions made by staff in the delivery of services and supports professional development and leadership at the local level positively influencing employee retention.

Results:

DISABILITY	YEAR	STATUS 26 – CLOSURE	REHAB RATE
Autism	2019	207	55%
	2018	176	53%
Deaf	2019	171	68.4%
	2018	149	63.88%
Mental Health	2019	1097	46%
	2018	1009	42%
DD/Cognitive	2019	386	47.6%
	2018	414	49.23%

These numbers reflect service priority areas identified by our State Rehabilitation Council. The focus was on service for individuals who were diagnosed with autism, deaf/hard of hearing, Mental Health or Developmentally disabled. The chart demonstrates successful closures in 2019 and 2018 and the related rehabilitation rate. Improvement was demonstrated in three of the four areas with our DD/Cognitive population showing a decrease.

Goal 4: MANAGING FOR INNOVATION

IVRS staff remain flexible and adapt to changes and service needs quickly by integrating innovation into their work. All IVRS staff have opportunities for discussion and planning for the future to help the agency achieve greater access to and usability of vocational rehabilitation services. Our goal is to achieve the most effective outcomes for our customers.

Strategy 4-A

Create a learning exchange focused on effective policies and practices resulting in alignment and consistent interpretation and application of policy.

Strategy 4-B

Develop and maintain a technology infrastructure that can support an ever-emerging service delivery system.

Strategy 4-C

IRSS case management system and the use of technology in the field continues to develop, providing opportunities for improved work effectiveness.

Strategy 4-D

IRSS case management system and the use of technology in the field continues to develop, providing opportunities for improved work effectiveness.

Results: Staff were not pleased with case management practices and made recommendations pertaining to system development. Internal resources have been committed to support the hiring of three developers. Legislative action is being taken to obtain approval for three FTE positions in the field to support services for the deaf culture. Resources, as allowed by budget, continue to support mobile technology use in the field in the form of cell phones and tablets.

Goal 5: MANAGEMENT BY FACTS

All IVRS staff use meaningful data to evaluate their individual and work unit performance. Data is used to adapt and adjust actions to positively impact the results for our customers.

Strategy 5-A

Utilize data reports and RSA technical assistance monitoring guide to assess agency performance levels.

Strategy 5-B

In combination with workforce planning, identify actions to integrate data into budget planning, CORE and personnel decision-making at the agency and field levels.

Strategy 5-C

Develop quality assurance program that reflects value and priorities for service delivery.

Results:

Communication and management structure for meetings is being changed to support field service training needs. The QA program has been revised and three offices were reviewed this past year with the new reporting format. RSA federal standards and indicators reflect:

1. Positive increase of 27 employment outcomes
2. Negative change in rehabilitation rate of .48% with goal of .55% (Incremental improvement from 2017 and 2018 46%, 47% to current 48%)
3. Positive increase of individuals in competitive integrated employment
4. Positive ratio of service for individuals with significant and most significant disabilities
5. Exceeding goal of earnings per hour as a ratio to state wages
6. Exceeding the expected federal change from application to closure
7. Exceeding our minority service rate goal.

Goal 6: FOCUS ON RESULTS AND CREATING VALUE

All IVRS staff focus on strategies to provide improved service to customers and partners. This approach will assist in planning opportunities and strategies to affect trends, issues and problems in a positive direction.

Strategy 6-A

Per the 2018 SRC statewide needs assessment, IVRS programs and services will be assessed to address value in serving individuals with Autism, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Mental Illness and Developmental Disabilities.

Strategy 6-B

Improve communication with our CRP's in the area of Employment First service delivery and in evaluation of satisfaction and quality of services provided.

Strategy 6-C

Staff training efforts implemented with consideration of diverse methods in meeting needs and interests of staff and partners.

Strategy 6-D

Address capacity for improved benefits planning resources throughout the state for all Iowans with disabilities.

Strategy 6-E

Identify, assess and evaluate opportunities to procure services better and faster for all customers.

Results: In progress with development of state plan in collaboration with core partners as well as progress driven by ReThink VR performance initiative. Statewide Needs assessment was completed and shared with SRC. Our Employment First efforts are sustained through a partnership with the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council, which is funding two different pilot project efforts in efforts to affect service outcomes. IVRS revised our Menu of Services and funding structure per feedback of our pilot sites and are implementing those changes this year with projects in Des Moines, Ames, Cedar Rapids and Dubuque.

Benefits Planning has been implemented through a tiered cadre approach. Training and webinars are held weekly in an open attendance manner providing opportunities for dialog and specific questions and answers, for both VR staff and our job candidates.

State Plan Goals

GOAL 1:

Iowa's employers will have access to skilled, diverse and Future Ready Iowa workers.

Progress:

Every employee of IVRS in our field offices has a performance plan highlighting the Governor's goal, which includes Training Iowans for the jobs of tomorrow, and this is the heart of Future Ready Iowa. Since 2014, each area office of IVRS has worked to develop a local service plan with the local One-Stops in their region, and these plans have included cross training and awareness of the Future Ready Website, with its information on program opportunities and direction.

Specialized vocational rehabilitation services are provided by IVRS through the development of comprehensive service plans, which outline the services that VR can provide, such as counseling and guidance, assessment for assistive technology, benefits planning, and specialized business services such as ergonomics, government incentives, specialized supports, accommodations, and accessibility reviews and reports. The IVRS service plans outline the supports and services required for an individual with a disability to obtain the skills they require to prepare for an enter into competitive, integrated employment in local in-demand industries, and other required employment services are obtained through consultation and referral to appropriate partner agencies. IVRS provides technical assistance to the One-Stop center and partners on accessibility for training and job search services, and can collaborate with the other programs to help ensure that job candidates receive the supports and services required for success. Regarding business services, much effort has occurred to promote integration of the regional business services teams and sector boards through strategies such as:

- Providing joint outreach to business and responding to requests for services by the staff who have the expertise;
- Integrated county teams to address the needs of businesses in a county where specific sector boards do not exist (as in the Davenport region, and parts of Region I);
- Fully integrated participation on sector boards so that needed information can be provided to businesses by board members who have the expertise; and so that information about the businesses in a sector can be shared throughout the center programs;
- Jointly planned events that allow businesses in a sector to present information about their industries to job ready candidates from the various partner programs, followed by opportunities for job candidates to interact individually with the business representatives, gather information, and even apply for a job within the sector industry of their choice (Reconnect: Iowa City/Cedar Rapids);
- Jointly planned reverse job fairs, and development of pipelines through corporate development, staff internships to learn about the business, and imbedded staff (Dubuque and Des Moines);
- Center-wide staffing of job ready cases on a regular basis to help ensure warm referrals, coordination of multi-agency job readiness services, joint representation to businesses for job development and placement, and follow-up.

GOAL 2:

Provide all Iowan's access to a continuum of high quality education, training, and career opportunities.

Progress:

IVRS has a number of current strategies focused on bringing pre-employment transition services, and real-life work experiences to high school students in all 99 Iowa counties. Given the high number of high school students in Iowa who are on IEPs and 504 plans, effort is directed to working collaboratively with our high schools and colleges, and in a collaborative manner with Center partner agencies. Our focus has been to begin early with high school students to introduce them, in collaboration with our other partners, to the career pathways in their local areas, and this is accomplished in a variety of ways. IVRS works closely with our community college partners to work hand-in-hand with the intermediary Network initiatives in most regions. This truly expands capacity for IVRS in providing pre-ETS and real-life work experiences such as plant tours, job shadows, career days, job fairs, and the like. IVRS piloted a practice which has become universal involving Interagency representation at the Fall high school planning

meetings including Title I, Titles 2 and 3, VR and IDB, Intermediaries and Intermediary Ins. In addition to jointly planned business tours, career days, and job fairs throughout the school year, IVRS has been working closely in all regions with our partners to expand the summer pre-employment transition services programs. Other IVRS initiatives have included occupational Skill Training programs, stem camps (Sioux City), the construction simulator for summer programs, and computer based virtual work samples (Z-Space). Some very unique IVRS initiatives have included Project Search in several regions, Making the Grade partnerships with VR, high schools, and local community rehabilitation programs, sector Board Career Videos, the Future Ready website, Registered Apprenticeship orientation and presentation, and use of the Career Index by IVRS staff. One very interesting initiative comes from the Dubuque School System called HEART, and this involves actual hands on experience in construction in local community projects, coupled with specific classroom training, such that high school graduates are ready for skilled employment or more advanced apprenticeship programs.

GOAL 3:

Iowa's workforce delivery system will align all programs and services in an accessible, seamless and integrated manner.

Progress:

WIOA has called for a collaborative, seamless system of services that will prepare Iowa workers for the well-paying jobs of the 21st century, and much effort has gone into the development of this collaborative system through partner cross-trainings in every region. Disability Access Committees assess program and physical accessibility, and jointly work out solutions for center issues. Additionally, the Disability Access Committees have spearheaded the Integration Continuum efforts to chart the progress of integration in each One-Stop region. The cross trainings have focused on staff from each program working together to become familiar with the services of the other partner programs, and on the development of effectively making warm referrals and tracking those referrals so that One-stop customers have access to all the services that they require, provided by those programs that have the expertise and training to provide those services. Another statewide activity of our Disability Access Committees has been to develop and present Customer surveys and focus groups to determine accessibility issues needing solutions, and as well, Development of local center processes for responding to requests for reasonable accommodations. With regard to business services, the local business services teams have developed Outreach strategies for local businesses, and strategies for responding to requests for services by staff who have the expertise.

State Plan/Strategic Plan Summary

Our State Plan and Strategic Plan goals support the work, Mission and Vision of the agency. They serve as a planning tool to positively impact employment services. The year 2020 is the 100th year of the public vocational rehabilitation program as well as the 30th year of the passing of the American with Disabilities Act. The action steps identified will ensure continued push to improve competitive integrated employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

In December of 2019, our Rehabilitation Services Bureau Chief, Steve Faulkner – who was the lead facilitator for our strategic plan efforts, provided to staff the following summary of the agency strategic vision:

“My good friends, as you probably already realize, we are rapidly approaching the year 2020. In this year, the public vocational rehabilitation program will be 100 years old. IVRS has participated with federal partners in identifying strategies to create a vision to lead us through 2020. The following are the main vision elements for Vision 2020, which we have adapted for IVRS:

- IVRS is mission-driven and focused on serving individuals with disabilities and our business partners
- IVRS leads change through innovative and cutting edge practices
- IVRS customizes services to meet the needs of our job candidates and our business customers
- IVRS creates collaborative partnerships to maximize resources and opportunities

Now, let us ask ourselves, has vision 2020 been realized? Throughout this past year, I have written about various aspects of our vision, and have given many examples of how local offices are working collaboratively with other One-Stop Center partners to advance integration, and make a creative, flexible business services system that will be accessible and relevant for all Iowans. As a part of such collaborative work, IVRS has been able to find creative ways to serve the Employment First population, and as well, the over 23,000 high school students on IEPs and 504 plans. I believe it is largely the leadership and problem solving skills of our local IVRS offices that have led many of the integration strategies that we have witnessed during this past year. Think of the great summer programs, and the business services team initiatives in every office, the cross trainings, and the jointly planned public events, and you will see what I mean.

But, even as we speak, we at IVRS are looking at how to “Re-Think Performance,” with an aim of achieving outcomes that we previously could only dream about. An area of focus that I have for the RSB will be how we can apply new strategies and collaborate to help us accomplish all the goals and requirements of WIOA in a way that is manageable for our field staff. The supervisors and I will be looking more at growth trends than at the raw numbers when evaluating performance in the field, and we will be looking at more flexibility in assignments where possible so that staff can work more to their passions. We have seen this played out in several offices already. Additionally, I want all our staff to feel empowered to try truly innovative strategies in case services—policy should be a guide to help us provide the best employment services possible within our regulations, but should not become a barrier to successful outcomes. I want staff to be able to receive the training and support they need to apply the specialized rehabilitation services that our JCs need—counseling and guidance, assistive technology, benefits planning, and a full range of specialized business services. I think there have been significant advancements in these areas this past year, and I have heard that we now have the most active and enthusiastic statewide teams in recent memory (Business Services, AT Team, Benefits Cadre, Strategic planning team, Coordinating Council, and others. We will continue to work on local teaming strategies, collaboration with partners, and most importantly, we will focus our main efforts on the two most critical elements of the public rehabilitation program--great employment outcomes and pre-employment transition services. The other activities that we spend our time with each day will be important to the extent that they support these elements of our work.”

Disability Determination Services Strategic Planning Efforts

The Bureau has made progress on the FY 19-22 Strategic Plan goals by strengthening our State/Federal partnership with SSA, increasing employee opportunity for engagement via local and national workgroups/details, enhancing security measures and standard operating procedures, implementing the use of a new case processing system, piloting Information Technology modernization efforts and focusing on employee retention through developing programs and workplace flexibilities.

Resource Reallocations

IVRS for the past year has contracted with the Department of Administrative Services for human resource and personnel support. IVRS management continues to review requests to fill positions through analysis of the budget team, workforce planning models and our case management data. This is driven with the understanding of a status quo budget, as well as annual increases in our operating costs and service delivery costs. Staff capacity has maintained, despite the increase of serving 7,000 more individuals, through our expanded contract services. We are, however, at a maximum in terms of our ability to effectively operate, monitor and report on the quality of these contracted programs. Without further revenue streams, we need to reduce personnel, operating and service costs, resulting in shrinking of the agency and consequently, a growth in the waiting list is eventually planned.

The DDS has flexible positions that provide bureau wide support. All FFY 19 hires were allocated to front line service. As compared to all other DDSB's around the nation, the Iowa Bureau has one of the highest disability examiner to all staff ration at 53.1% The national average is 45.8%. If you take into consideration the medical consultants as direct staff the ratio changes to 70.9% as compared to the national average of 50%.

Performance Plan Results

Key Results 1 of 2

Core Function

Name: Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Independent Living

Description: Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) provides a wide variety of services for persons with disabilities that lead to the attainment of their employment, independence and economic goals. Business and industry is also a customer of IVRS to whom various services are provided to help meet workplace and workforce needs. The desired outcome is competitive integrated employment that meets the needs and interests of our eligible job candidates. Services include: assessment, medical referral for the diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental impairments, training, personal assistance services, placement, rehabilitation technology services, maintenance, transportation, small business enterprise assistance, and post-employment services. Services are planned for and delivered according to the individualized needs of the job candidate to achieve employment, and services are expanded beyond what can be obtained through a partner agency due to the unique nature and need of the job candidate.

Why we are doing this: Federal law was enacted after recognizing that individuals with disabilities faced severe discrimination in the workforce and required specialized assistance to achieve equal opportunity under the law. IVRS provides services to help persons with disabilities find and maintain employment or to help them live independently (not in a group home or other care facility). This greatly enhances their quality of life and adds to the Iowa economy through reduced dependence on public support and through the payment of taxes. Our work is consistent with the Governor's stated priorities specifically related to the Future Ready Iowa Initiative.

What we are doing to achieve results: Our agency is participating in Employment First and Future Ready Iowa initiatives, serving on Regional Workforce Boards, the State Workforce Board, as well as providing Pre-Employment Transition Services, business services, post-secondary education, counseling and guidance for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

IVRS collaborates with approximately 80 community rehabilitation programs across the state to provide comprehensive rehabilitation services. The case management system, Iowa Rehabilitation Services System (IRSS), is closely managed and reviewed for its operating efficiency. This plays an important role in data collection and state/federal reporting and case management.

IVRS has a federal mandate to serve the most significantly disabled individuals first, when resources are limited. The focus upon vocational placement and the prioritizing of core initiatives in each area office contributes to the number of individuals placed into competitive integrated employment. Through the expertise of the counseling staff, collaboration with job candidates and other services and resources, IVRS connects job candidates to competitive, integrated employment. Every employed job candidate becomes a tax payer and a consumer with more buying power, thereby increasing Iowa's economy and tax base, while also saving the State's support dollars. **IVRS has demonstrated a positive return on investment for state dollars that are returned to the economy – serving as an economic stimulus.**

IVRS is mandated by Section 511 of the WIOA to encourage job candidates who typically only achieved employment in community rehabilitation programs (CRP) at subminimum wage to explore and discover the opportunities of work competitively in an integrated employment setting. As a result, local IVRS offices have met and developed plans with local community rehabilitation program providers to have a planned approach toward placement services for their most significantly disabled population. Recognizing that the CRPs and IVRS do not have the capacity – nor does the local business community have the capacity – to place hundreds of individuals in supported employment, these plans are instrumental in achieving a successful business labor force model. The Rehabilitation Services Bureau Chief, through a recommendation made by our SRC, is conducting outreach efforts with the approximately twenty-four

remaining sub-minimum wage providers in Iowa to determine their awareness and understanding our process. This will occur in 2020 as part of our follow-up efforts. IVRS, through our State Rehabilitation Council, is contracting with the Iowa Coalition for Integration and Employment to perform a statewide needs assessment and to assist in providing outreach and information to individuals in segregated settings.

Data Sources: IVRS Case Service Records.

Resources Used: IVRS is funded with a combination of 78.7% federal funds and matched with 21.3% of non-federal funds that are required to generate the federal funding. State appropriation for 2019 was \$6,083,872.37 Total FTEs were 244.

#1 200,000 NEW JOBS

In PY2018, IVRS placed 2,110 Iowans with disabilities into competitive employment. IVRS assisted 31 entrepreneurs with their Iowa business! Cumulatively from 2015-2018, 125 businesses were successfully started, expanded or acquired with support from IVRS.

#2 15% REDUCTION IN GOVERNMENT

IVRS provides services to individuals with disabilities that span many fields including partnering with the Department of Education, Department of Corrections, Department of Human Services, Department of Veteran Affairs and the Department of Labor. 97 Individuals were on public support for their living expenses and are now supporting themselves, a savings of \$900,276 annually for the state.

#3 25% INCREASE IN FAMILY INCOMES

For those successful IVRS employment outcomes, there was an income increase of \$32.9 million from the time of their application status until their case file closure. This is a 487% increase in their income, as reported at application

#4 #1 SCHOOLS IN THE NATION

29% of our referrals come from Iowa school districts for youth in transition. In PY2018, 905 students were successfully employed working 30 hours a week, with average earnings of \$12.21/hour. Over \$4.92 million was spent on tuition assistance for students in our post-secondary training programs to obtain educational and occupational skills training to help compete in today's labor market.

Agency-wide

PY	Potentially Eligible Students Served	Job Candidates Served	Total Job Candidates Served	Closed, Rehabilitated	Hours Worked per Week	Average Hourly Wage
2018	7,149	16,805	23,954	2,110	28	\$12.45
2017	4,726	17,514	22,240	2,090	29	\$12.09
2016	1,918	17,779	19,697	2,230	30	\$12.03
2015	222	17,654	17,876	2,283	31	\$11.84

Veterans

PY	Veterans Referred	Closed, Rehabilitated	Hours Worked per Week	Average Hourly Wage
2018	160	40	30	\$14.22
2017	178	49	31	\$14.93
2016	194	48	33	\$12.87
2015	194	63	33	\$14.10

Transition Students

PY	Potentially Eligible Students Served	Transition Students Served	Total Transition Students Served	Closed, Rehabilitated	Hours Worked per Week	Average Hourly Wage
2018	7,149	3,720	10,656	905	30	\$12.21
2017	4,726	3,769	8,495	927	32	\$11.86
2016	1,918	3,806	5,724	993	34	\$11.67
2015	222	3,911	4,133	971	34	\$11.63
2014	1	4,995	4,996	936	34	\$10.88

Key Results 2 of 2

CORE FUNCTION

Name: Disability Determination Services – Economic Supports

Description: The IVRS provides Disability Determination Services to claimants for Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income in Iowa through a relationship with the Social Security Administration (SSA) – per federal regulations.

Why we are doing this: To enhance economic independence for Iowans with disabilities through cash benefits and healthier Iowans through access to Medicare and Medicaid.

What we are doing to achieve results: The electronic process system to determine claimant eligibility for social security benefits is operating effectively. IVRS DDSB expanded the use of management information and data analytics to make business decisions and revised staff performance expectations to improve communication and accountability for service delivery. Continuing business process reviews and targeted quality reviews occur to ensure efficient and accurate service. The DDS performs continuous business process reviews to enhance service and evaluate stewardship. Technology advancements are ongoing with recent automation of case referrals to staff physicians and psychologists. The DDS teams with state health providers on electronic health records submission. Targeted quality reviews occur to ensure efficient and accurate service.

Data Sources: Social Security Administration Office of Quality Assurance and Performance Assessment.

Resources Used: This program receives 100% federal funding of approximately \$26 million from the Social Security Administration. Total of 173 FTEs.

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Agency Performance Plan Results

FY 2019

(Numbers in red indicate actual result)

Name of Agency: Department of Education, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services			
Agency Mission: To work for and with individuals with disabilities to achieve their employment, independence and economic goals.			
Core Function	Performance Measure (Outcome)	Performance Target(s)	Link to Strategic Plan Goal(s)
CF: Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Independent Living	Wage ratio of IVRS clients to state average	0.52 .56	Goal 1 - To maximize every client's opportunity to reach their economic, independence and employment goals.
Desired Outcome(s):			
Full-time, or if appropriate, part-time competitive employment in the integrated labor market.			Goal 2 - Increase advocacy and support for rights of individuals with disabilities.
Services, Products, Activities	Performance Measures	Performance Target(s)	Strategies/Recommended Actions
1. Employment (Vocational Rehabilitation) Org# 0001-283-1000 0001-283-2000 0034-283-0704 0366-283-0708 0395-283-0703 0398-283-0093	A. Percent employed (federal reporting) B. Access to services ratio of minority to non-minority clients (federal reporting) C. Number of employment outcomes (federal reporting) D. Number of Self-Employment clients who achieve start-up or expansion of a business	A. 55.8% 48.85 B. 0.80 .907 C. 2100 2,124 D. 25 31	1. High-quality client services and outcomes. 2. Comprehensive system of job placement. 3. Effective collaboration. 4. Manage waiting lists for services. 5. Continued focus on core service delivery efforts. We are seeing a decrease in the rehabilitation rate and the State Rehabilitation Council identified this as a concern as the current ratio is \$47.02%. This is being reviewed and strategies will be implemented in an effort to positively impact the number. Our Self-Employment program went through changes and we have developed a micro-enterprise service system, which we hope will increase outcomes.
2. Independent Living (Vocational Rehabilitation) Org# 0001-283-0714	A. Percentage of persons meeting their goals B. Number of persons able to continue to live independently in their homes	A. 55% 70.3% B. 30 19	1. High-quality client services and outcomes. 2. Effective collaboration. 3. Enhanced external communication. *Staff time dedicated to Independent Living services decreased in the last two fiscal years. In addition, average expenditure per client case is significantly higher compared to 5 years ago. These factors, along with limited program funds, have affected the number of clients served by IVRS in IL services.

Name of Agency: Department of Education, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services			
Agency Mission: To work for and with individuals with disabilities to achieve their employment, independence and economic goals.			
Core Function	Performance Measure (Outcome)	Performance Target(s)	Link to Strategic Plan Goal(s)
CF: Economic Supports	Percent of claims accurately determined per SSA standards (initial net accuracy)	95% 95.9%	Goal 1 - To maximize every client's opportunity to reach their economic, independence and employment goals.
Desired Outcome(s):			
Economic independence for disabled Iowans through cash benefits, and healthier Iowans through access to Medicare and Medicaid.			
Services, Products, Activities	Performance Measures	Performance Target(s)	Strategies/Recommended Actions
3. Disability Determination: Initial review of claims and continuing disability reviews (CDR) (Economic Supports Org# 0231-283-0716 0394-283-0702 0394-283-0712 0394-283-0722 0394-283-0723	A. Initial claim processing time B. Percent of budgeted CDRs completed	A. 85 days 76 days B. 100% 102.2%	1. Develop quality management plan. 2. Enhance training where needs are identified.

Name of Agency: Department of Education, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services			
Agency Mission: To work for and with individuals with disabilities to achieve their employment, independence and economic goals.			
Core Function	Performance Measure (Outcome)	Performance Target(s)	Link to Strategic Plan Goal(s)
CF: Agency Resource Management	1. Percent of internal customer satisfaction with key support services 2. Percent of time IT network services are available to staff	1. 85% (Not done) 2. 95% 99%	Goal 3 Increase capacity to serve all VR clients. Goal 4 Increase interest and satisfaction in VR careers. No internal customer satisfaction survey was completed. Instead, we did a statewide survey effort to impact strategic plan initiatives.
Desired Outcome(s):			
Resources are sufficient to provide services per IVRS mission and federal guidelines for Vocational Rehabilitation and Disability Determination.			
Services, Products, Activities	Performance Measures	Performance Target(s)	Strategies/Recommended Actions
4. Infrastructure (Resource Management) Org# 0001-283-3000 0001-283-4000	A. Percent of required non-federal match dollars generated B. Ratio of employees to supervisors C. Inspection results – Parker Building	A. 100% 100.0% B. 12:1 15.72-1 C. DAS responsibility now, as “owner” of the Parker Building	1. Maintain and improve sustainability model and use IRSS to forecast resource needs. 2. Not fill supervisory positions automatically when vacancies arise. 3. Maintain contact with DAS regarding maintenance operations in Parker Building.